

We claim:

1. A spittoon system for a printing mechanism having a printhead with a substantially linear nozzle array oriented in a first direction, comprising:
  - 5 a frame; and
  - a roller mounted to the frame for rotation about an axis oriented in said first direction to receive ink spit from said printhead.
2. A spittoon system according to claim 1 for a printing mechanism  
10 having a second printhead, further comprising a second roller mounted to the frame for rotation and about a second axis oriented in said first direction to receive ink spit from said second printhead.
3. A spittoon system according to claim 1 for a printing mechanism  
15 having a second printhead, wherein said roller is oriented to receive ink spit from said second printhead.
4. A spittoon system according to claim 1, further comprising a drive  
motor coupled to rotate said roller.  
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5. A spittoon system according to claim 4, further comprising a gear train which couples the motor to the roller.
6. A spittoon system according to claim 1, wherein the frame defines a  
25 waste ink reservoir located to receive waste ink from said roller.
7. A spittoon system according to claim 6, further comprising a liner of an absorbent material located within said waste ink reservoir.
- 30 8. A spittoon system according to claim 1 for a printing mechanism having second, third, and forth prinheads, further comprising:

a second roller mounted to the frame for rotation and about a second axis oriented in said first direction to receive ink spit from said second printhead;

a third roller mounted to the frame for rotation and about a third axis oriented in said first direction to receive ink spit from said third printhead; and

5 a fourth roller mounted to the frame for rotation and about a fourth axis oriented in said first direction to receive ink spit from said fourth printhead.

9. A spittoon system according to claim 8, further comprising:

a drive motor;

10 a gear train which couples the motor to said roller, said second roller, said third roller, and said fourth roller;

wherein the frame defines a waste ink reservoir located to receive waste ink from said roller, said second roller, said third roller, and said fourth roller;

15 plural scrapers mounted to said frame to engage said rollers and remove waste ink therefrom; and

a liner of an absorbent material located within said waste ink reservoir.

10. A method of purging waste ink from a printhead of a printing mechanism having printheads for dispensing ink, comprising:

20 positioning at least some of said printheads over rollers; and purging waste ink from said printheads onto the said rollers.

11. A method according to claim 10 wherein said printheads have nozzles which dispense said ink, and said positioning comprises positioning said rollers a 25 substantially uniform distance from said nozzles.

12. A method according to claim 10 wherein said printheads form a first contour and said positioning comprises positioning said rollers in a second contour similar to the first contour.

30 13. A method according to claim 12 wherein said first contour comprises

an arcuate shape, and said second contour comprises an arcuate shape.

14. A method according to claim 12 wherein said first contour comprises a semicircular shape, and said second contour comprises a semicircular shape.

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15. A spittoon system for a printing mechanism having a printhead with a substantially linear nozzle array oriented in a first direction, comprising:

means for receiving ink spit from said printhead; and

10 means for rotating said means for receiving ink about an axis oriented in said first direction.

16. A spittoon system according to claim 15 wherein said printing mechanism has a second printhead with a substantially linear nozzle array oriented in said first direction, and further comprising:

15 means for receiving ink spit from said second printhead; and

means for rotating said means for receiving ink spit from said second printhead about a second axis oriented in said first direction, said second axis distinct from said axis.

20 17. A spittoon system according to claim 15 further comprising means for storing waste ink.

18. A spittoon system according to claim 15 further comprising means for scraping waste ink from said means for receiving ink.

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19. A spittoon system according to claim 15 further comprising:

means for scraping waste ink from said means for receiving ink;

means for storing waste ink;

means for absorbing waste ink in said means for storing; and

30 wherein said means for rotating comprises a motor and means for transferring rotational motion from said motor to said means for receiving ink.

20. A printing mechanism, comprising:
  - a chassis defining a printzone and a servicing zone;
  - a printhead having a substantially linear nozzle array oriented in a first direction;
  - a carriage which moves the printhead through the printzone and the servicing zone;
  - a frame located in the servicing zone; and
  - a roller mounted to the frame for rotation about an axis oriented in said first direction and located to receive ink spit from said printhead.